

canpfa

The Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit Providers For the Aging

Testimony to the Aging Committee

Presented by Mag Morelli, President

February 10, 2011

Regarding

- **Senate Bill 149, An Act Concerning Improved Social Worker to Resident Ratios In Nursing Homes**
- **Senate Bill 365, An Act Concerning Investigations by Protective Services for the Elderly**
- **Senate Bill 366, An Act Concerning Funding for Adult Day Care Centers**
- **Senate Bill 774, An Act Increasing Eligibility for the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program**
- **Senate Bill 775, An Act Increasing Eligibility for the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly**
- **House Bill 5499, An Act Concerning Financial Assistance to the State's Assisted Living Pilot Projects**
- **House Bill 6155, An Act Reducing the Individual Contribution under the State Funded Home Care Program for Elders**

Good morning Senator Prague, Representative Serra, and members of the Committee. My name is Mag Morelli and I am the president of the Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit Providers for the Aging (CANPFA). On behalf of CANPFA I would like to submit testimony on all of the bills that are before you today and speak to three of the bills.

CANPFA is a membership organization representing over 130 mission driven and not-for-profit provider organizations serving elderly and disabled individuals across the continuum of care including nursing homes, residential care homes, housing for the elderly, continuing care retirement communities, adult day centers, home care and assisted living agencies. CANPFA members are sponsored by religious, fraternal, community, and governmental organizations that are committed to providing quality care and services to their residents and clients. Our member organizations, many of which have served their communities for generations, are dedicated to providing the services that people need, when they need them, in the place they call home.

CANPFA promotes a vision in which every community offers an integrated and coordinated continuum of high quality and affordable long term health care, housing and community based services. We strongly support the principles of ensuring choice for our seniors regardless of where they fall on the continuum and of investing in services and reforms that will ensure that choice. With this in mind, I submit the following testimony:

Senate Bill 366, An Act Concerning Funding for Adult Day Care Centers

CANPFA supports Connecticut's commitment to building a balanced system of long term care services for our elderly and chronically ill. But quality services cannot be sustained without adequate rates of reimbursement – and without adequate reimbursement, not only will a balanced system of long term care fail to thrive, but long standing, high quality providers within that system will be lost. This principle applies to adult day centers.

Adult day centers are a wonderful community-based long term care resource, but they are endangered by the current low rate of reimbursement they receive from the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders. Adult day centers provide older adults who are living in the community with the medical care and social interaction they need during the day within a supervised and structured environment. A comprehensive menu of services is offered and "door to door" transportation is provided to and from home. Centers also serve a strong role in care coordination and caregiver support. They can provide respite to family caregivers and allow others to continue working while serving as the primary caregiver for their loved one at home.

Right now the adult day centers are losing on average \$17.78 a day when they care for a Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders client and it is very difficult for these centers to make up this loss through other payer sources. Yet participation in an adult day center program can help families to delay and often avoid nursing home placement, making it an extremely cost effective option for the state – even at a rate of \$75 a day as is proposed in this bill. **It therefore makes sense to provide this rate increase to the adult day centers** in an effort preserve their existence as a viable and *cost effective* option for older adults enrolled in the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders.

Senate Bill 365, An Act Concerning Investigations by Protective Services for the Elderly

CANPFA would like to raise a concern with Section 2(a)(2) of this proposal. We do not understand why this bill is seeking to enable the state to ignore a report of suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment or the need for protective services of an elderly person based only on the timing of the report. If we are correct in our interpretation, this bill is proposing that if someone were to make a report of suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment or the need of protective services and the State Protective Services were to find no basis to that report, than the state could ignore all subsequent reports regarding the same elderly person within a 6 month period - unless the subsequent reporters (some of whom may be mandated reporters) prove "by a preponderance of the evidence" that the person is being abused or circumstances have changed. This seems to be an unwarranted and arbitrary timeline for inaction and an onerous standard for the reporter. We therefore raise the concern that this proposal may not be in the best interest of the vulnerable elderly population that we serve.

Senate Bill 149, An Act Concerning Improved Social Worker to Resident Ratio in Nursing Homes

It is difficult for CANPFA to comment on the impact of this bill because it does not include the specific social worker to resident ratio that would be required. However, while modifications to minimum staffing requirements for social workers may not affect every nursing home, it can be expected that an increase in requirements would have a fiscal impact on many facilities. Therefore any such proposal **must include an increase in Medicaid nursing home rates sufficient to cover the cost** of the new requirement.

Senate Bill 774, An Act Increasing Eligibility for the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program

Senate Bill 775, An Act Increasing Eligibility for the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly

House Bill 6155 An Act Reducing the Individual Contribution under the State Funded Home Care Program for Elders

As stated earlier in our testimony, CANPFA believes in the principle of ensuring choice for our seniors regardless of where they fall on the continuum of care. While I am not versed on and therefore cannot speak to the immediate financial impact these particular eligibility proposals would have on our state budget, CANPFA believes that a strong and balanced continuum of care that provides the right care, in the place, at the right time will lead to a more efficient and effective care delivery system. It is for this reason that we continue our support for these valuable funding sources for community based long term care services.

House Bill 5499, An Act Concerning Financial Assistance to the State's Assisted Living Pilot Projects

CANPFA has long supported the assisted living pilot project which incorporates a partnership concept of utilizing both private and public funds to finance assisted living services when an individual's private funds begin to run out. This pilot program has proven to be a valuable option for many residents in private assisted living who might otherwise be forced to seek nursing home placement. We believe it is appropriate to expand the pilot's capacity and would very much like to see a data analysis of the savings that the state has realized through this pilot to date.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide this testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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